

DNREC groundbreaking ceremony for new Fork Branch Trail held in Dover

DOVER – Governor John Carney was joined by DNREC Secretary Shawn M. Garvin, Kent County Tourism Director Wendie Vestfall, other state and city officials, and members of the conservation community, to break ground for the new Fork Branch Trail in Dover.



(L to R) Shawn M. Garvin, Jan "Running Dove" Durham, Dick "Quiet Thunder" Gilbert, and Tony "Painted Pony" Durham

"Our state's trails are not just good for trail users, they're also good for our economy," said Governor Carney. "Trails in the First State are drawing more and more visitors to Delaware, where tourism accounts for \$3.1 billion in economic activity. Trail-related activities are the number one outdoor recreation activity in the First State, and we're taking another step forward as we break ground on the new Fork Branch Trail."

The Fork Branch Nature Preserve is one of Dover's last remaining natural areas – a 247-acre property that contains a

unique stand of old growth American beech, a wooded stream corridor, and several rare and threatened plant species. The preserve is located at the corner of Kenton and West Denneys roads, along the Maidstone Branch in the St. Jones River Watershed.

“The Fork Branch Trail will offer an excellent opportunity for families and children to get outdoors, enjoy nature, and be physically active,” said Secretary Garvin. “The trail offers users an urban oasis of nature located within the city limits of Dover. Soon, everyone will have the chance to marvel at the natural gifts of a large, mature forest in this densely populated area.”

The Division of Parks & Recreation will construct, manage, and maintain the accessible, pedestrian-only trail. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of this year or spring of 2018, depending on conditions. The new trail will be 5-feet wide, and loop approximately 1 mile through the pristine preserve providing opportunities to experience native fauna and beautiful landscapes. Depending on conditions, the trail may be open as soon as the end of this year.

More trails for walking, hiking, biking, jogging and related activities have ranked consistently as the highest outdoor recreation need identified by Delawareans throughout the state. The Fork Branch Trail adds to the growing need for recreational opportunities for the city of Dover and Kent County.

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